

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

52

2 file

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

2 August 1984

USSR-West Germany: Moscow's Revanchism Charges
Chill Bilateral Ties

Summary

An increasingly strident Soviet propaganda campaign against an allegedly spreading revanchist spirit in West Germany, begun after initial INF deployments last winter, appears to be backfiring. Indeed, the campaign has undermined Soviet influence in West Germany; it has angered the Kohl government, sparked negative media commentary, and even offended the opposition Social Democrats. Although detente remains high on Bonn's agenda, the Kohl government is under little pressure to appease Soviet concerns at the moment. In addition to having support at home, Bonn notes that intra-German relations appear to be still improving despite additional Soviet scrutiny and complaints that good bilateral relations are inopportune in a period of East-West tensions. Other East Europeans, moreover, are still willing to deal with Bonn, and Moscow significantly has not seen fit to disturb bilateral economic relations. As maladroit as the Soviet propaganda campaign is, Moscow probably will persist with it as one of the few means at its disposal to impress on West Germans, East Europeans, and the Soviet public that the current state of East-West relations is deeply troubled. [redacted]

25X1

This memorandum was prepared by [redacted] Office of European Analysis, and [redacted] Office of Soviet Analysis. Information available as of 2 August 1984 was used in its preparation. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to the Chief, Western Europe Division, EURA [redacted] or the Chief, Policy Analysis Division, SOVA [redacted]

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

EUR M 84-10162

25X1

The Anti-Revanchism Campaign

Since US INF deployments began last December, Moscow's propaganda concerning a possible revival of West German revanchism and militarism has been growing increasingly alarmist. Soviet media now freely discuss the alleged rebirth in West Germany of a determination to restore German hegemony in Europe, West German efforts to undermine East Germany, and the danger of rising Fascist and neo-Nazi sentiment in Europe at large. Some media in Eastern Europe -- Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Poland -- have picked up on the campaign to a lesser extent, voicing suspicion of intra-German relations and criticism of other East Bloc states for trying to promote improved East-West relations. [redacted]

25X1

By evoking dreaded images of Germany's past, Moscow apparently hopes to convince Bonn that its continued support for INF has damaged bilateral relations, to reinforce the theme that the international situation has reached a level of danger unprecedented in the postwar era, and to warn East Germany -- and perhaps other East Europeans -- against moving too close to Bonn. Moscow probably views the supposed German threat as an especially useful bogeyman for diverting public opinion in Poland from the regime's internal problems. Both Soviet Premier Tikhonov and Polish leader Jaruzelski made the threat of German revanchism a central theme in speeches to the Polish Sejm on 21 July. [redacted]

25X1

The propaganda charges also reflect knee-jerk reactions of Soviet leaders accustomed to suspecting the worst of the Germans. [redacted]

25X1

[redacted]

[redacted] We believe [redacted] that weaning West Germany away from close support for NATO policies remains a key long-term foreign policy goal for Moscow and that Soviet policy still clearly differentiates between the United States and West Germany. Soviet spokesmen have not displayed the same degree of pessimism about the Bonn government that they have about the Reagan Administration, and some Soviet commentators have publicly suggested that Kohl serves as a moderating influence over Washington

25X1

and a force for detente. Although the bilateral political climate has worsened, the Soviets have continued to seek diplomatic contacts with the West Germans. Economic relations also remain on track, and West Germany continues to be the USSR's largest trading partner in the West and a major source of Western technology. [redacted]

25X1

The West German Response

The Soviet statements have been publicized widely in West Germany. Although public reactions are difficult to gauge, the statements have elicited much negative media commentary. Bonn has responded to Soviet charges by emphasizing West Germany's commitment to detente and its belief that reunification and border changes can only come about peacefully. Moreover, both government and opposition leaders have pointed out that the Soviets implicitly accepted the West Germans' commitment to peaceful reunification in a letter of understanding associated with the 1970 Moscow Treaty normalizing bilateral relations. [redacted]

25X1

Even the Social Democrats have been disappointed with the Soviet behavior. [redacted]

25X1

Indeed, a top CDU official earlier this week publicly praised the SPD's reaction to the Soviet revanchism charges, including Bahr's stand on the question of German unity during his meetings in Moscow. [redacted]

25X1

Effects of Moscow's Behavior

The effect of Moscow's actions has been to weaken for the moment its leverage with West Germany. As a result of perceived Soviet interference in West Germany's affairs, the Kohl government now faces less domestic pressure to advocate Western arms control concessions or changes in the INF deployment schedule. At the same time, Moscow's readiness to continue economic ties and to maintain the appearance of a dialogue has reduced Bonn's sense of urgency in bringing the Soviets back toward detente. Bonn appears willing to wait for the Soviets to return at their own pace to a constructive stance regarding arms control talks and other East-West issues. [redacted]

25X1

Part of Bonn's feistiness may stem from the readiness of some East Europeans -- notably East Germany and Hungary -- to continue a high level dialogue with Bonn despite Soviet scare tactics. Kohl has even received an invitation to visit Czechoslovakia. Under these circumstances, Soviet-West

German bilateral political relations are less significant than a few years ago when they appeared to be a prerequisite for a warming in intra-German relations. In contrast to earlier threats that INF deployments would bring on an "ice age" in intra-German relations, the pace of the relationship has appeared to pick up. Nevertheless, Bonn fully recognizes Moscow's ultimate control over East Berlin's Germany policy. [redacted]

25X1

There are recurring reports that Moscow is indeed concerned by the extent of recent intra-German developments. Moscow signaled its disquiet most clearly when Pravda published a lengthy diatribe against alleged West German revanchist ambitions toward the East on 27 July, just two days after Bonn announced its approval of a \$330 million loan guarantee to East Germany that was linked implicitly to East German humanitarian concessions. The article pointedly warned that Bonn is trying to undermine East German sovereignty by using "economic levers and political contacts" to solicit concessions on "matters of principle." The article's appearance prompted Kohl to refute publicly the revanchism charges and dismiss the entire Soviet campaign as "ineffective." [redacted]

25X1

Moscow may have backed itself into a corner on intra-German relations. If Moscow had forced a cutback in relations last November, the West German public and the political opposition would have blamed INF deployments and Kohl, and the government would have been under much pressure to take steps to limit or repair the damage. If the Soviets were to cool the relationship now, however, they would be blamed and the public probably would rally around the Kohl government. Nevertheless, the intra-German relationship remains the most vulnerable target of Soviet pressure. [redacted]

25X1

The Soviets thus far show no sign of reversing field. Indeed, their most recent rhetoric has grown even more vituperative. Moscow apparently calculates that emphasizing the German threat will pay dividends at home and in East Europe that outweigh the potential costs to Soviet-West German bilateral relations. The Soviets probably also feel that pressure tactics will eventually work to their advantage with Bonn. In this respect, Moscow shows little capacity for innovation in handling traditional adversaries and is resorting to methods it has used repeatedly in the postwar period when it has been displeased with Bonn's policies. For want of a more effective strategy, Moscow will probably continue to lash out rhetorically at perceived threats from West Germany while seeking to protect its substantial economic and political equities with Bonn from major damage. [redacted]

25X1

Implications of the West Germans' New Assertiveness*

The Kohl government has become more assertive in pursuing "German interests" since INF deployments began, most notably in efforts to improve relations with East Germany. Indeed, both the government and the Social Democratic opposition agree on the basis for Bonn's Germany policy. The West Germans regard this as no one else's business and are sensitive to interference from East or West. By criticizing Bonn's approach to this fundamental issue, the Soviets have sparked a nationalistic response in the Federal Republic. Although such Soviet behavior in the past would have driven West Germany even closer to its Western Allies, today it may further fuel the West Germans' determination to control their own destiny more fully and to pursue German interests more aggressively and independently. [REDACTED]

25X1

The Kohl government almost certainly will not modify its position on German unity in the face of Soviet threats. This stems from a constitutional obligation, and the government derives substantial domestic political benefits from its present course. On the contrary, Bonn appears genuinely irritated with the Soviets and for the time being appears more willing than in the past to confront Moscow. The West Germans last month detained for three days a large truck for which Moscow claimed diplomatic status and refused to back down in the face of Soviet protests. [REDACTED]

25X1

Still, despite their present irritation with Moscow's heavy-handedness, the West Germans remain fundamentally committed to good relations with the East and to arms control. If Moscow indicates a readiness for a thaw in relations, the West Germans will want to exploit it. Although Bonn realizes that arms control prospects for the moment are bleak, it will expect the West to be prepared to respond to any future Soviet initiatives so as to maintain the West's propaganda advantage. In short, Bonn's attitude will depend on how Moscow plays its hand. [REDACTED]

25X1

25X1

Page Denied

Next 4 Page(s) In Document Denied